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In the final analysis, we cannot get distracted, in my opinion. We need to go down both paths, making sure today we have the most efficient process possible but that tomorrow we're energy independent, because in the final analysis, that will be the only way in which we will continue to keep our economy moving, our national security intact, and our environment clean and healthy.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank my friend.

I believe for those things that look toward better solutions for the future, better conservation now, we all should be focused there. We also should be focused on using American resources, and frankly asking every question why they haven't been used. Again, I will just conclude my remarks by saying I know that these leases have been almost doubled in the last 7 years. And how long it takes to develop, some of them issued only in the last 1 or 2 years for 10 years at a time, I don't know what the planning is on that, but I am absolutely committed to the most efficient and effective use of America's resources for America's future, and I would like to see this Congress work together to get there.

#### DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

#### HOURLY OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow; and further, that when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 17, for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 6063.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

#### NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AU- THORIZATION ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1257 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 6063.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 6063) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes, with Ms. BORDALLO in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GORDON of Tennessee asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Chairman, today I am asking my colleagues in the House to ensure this country's leadership in space and aeronautics program by passing H.R. 6063, the NASA Authorization Act of 2008.

First, I want to thank and commend Chairman UDALL of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics on his leadership in introducing this bill and for taking a clear bipartisan approach to the development of H.R. 6063. I was pleased to be original cosponsor, but I was even more pleased that ranking minority member of our Committee on Science and Technology, Mr. HALL of Texas, and ranking minority member of our Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, Mr. FEENEY of Florida, were also original cosponsors.

Madam Chairman, their actions show that the importance of NASA's future in space and aeronautics is truly a bipartisan concern. And I want to thank them for their full support.

In that regard, I also would like to thank Ed Feddeman, Ken Monroe, Katy Crooks, and Lee Arnold of the minority staff for their help on this legislation. I also want to thank and acknowledge the hard work of our majority staff involved in the development of the bill, Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee staff director Dick Obermann, Allen Li, Pam Whitney, Devin Bryant, and John Piazza.

This bill passed the subcommittee and the full committee unanimously. And I think that record is in no small part due to the hard work that both sides of the aisle put into this legislation.

Madam Chairman, as we look to the transition to the new administration

next year, it's important that Congress send a strong message on the best future course for our Nation's space and aeronautics program. The bipartisan consensus we have reached on H.R. 6063 signals that Congress believes a balanced NASA program of science, aeronautics, and human spaceflight, and exploration is important and worthy of the Nation's support. Yet I want to emphasize that H.R. 6063 takes a fiscally responsible approach to providing this support.

The baseline authorization represents a 2.8 percent increase, which is inflationary at best, over the level of the authorization of fiscal year 2008. The bill also includes a special funding augmentation to accelerate the development of the crew exploration vehicle and thus minimize the human spaceflight gap that will make us dependent on the Russians to get our astronauts to and from the International Space Station until the CEV is operational.

I don't think any of us wants to or looks forward to the day when we must rely on another Nation to launch U.S. astronauts into space, but that is what we face. I want to minimize that dependency as much as possible.

However, even including that augmentation, the total funding authorization will only get us back to NASA's fiscal year 1992 funding level in terms of purchasing power.

H.R. 6063's baseline authorization also reflects the importance of NASA to the Nation's innovation agenda. NASA science and technology activities contribute much to our national competitiveness initiative, and I think we need to recognize NASA's role in that regard. NASA was included in last year's America COMPETES Act, but we didn't include an authorization then since we knew we would be reauthorizing NASA this year.

H.R. 6063 does that providing by providing a baseline authorization for NASA that includes a rate of increase over the fiscal year 2008 appropriated level that is consistent with the rate of increase proposed for agencies included under the America COMPETES Act.

Madam Chairman, this bill includes many provisions that are critical to ensuring the future strength of our Nation, including both the future health of our aviation system and our ability to better understand and respond to climate change and other challenges facing the earth's system.

It isn't always recognized that NASA counts for some three-fifths of the Nation's climate research funding. And it's a critical part of the Nation's climate research efforts. In addition, H.R. 6063 demonstrates that a properly structured human spaceflight and exploration program can provide benefits of technological, scientific, and geopolitical significance that are worthy of our Nation's investment.

This bill also includes provisions that will ensure a productive return on the Nation's investment in developing and